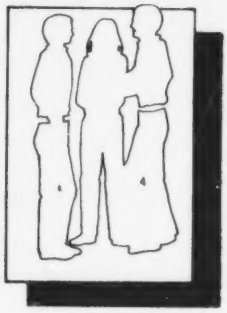
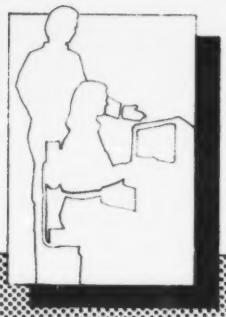
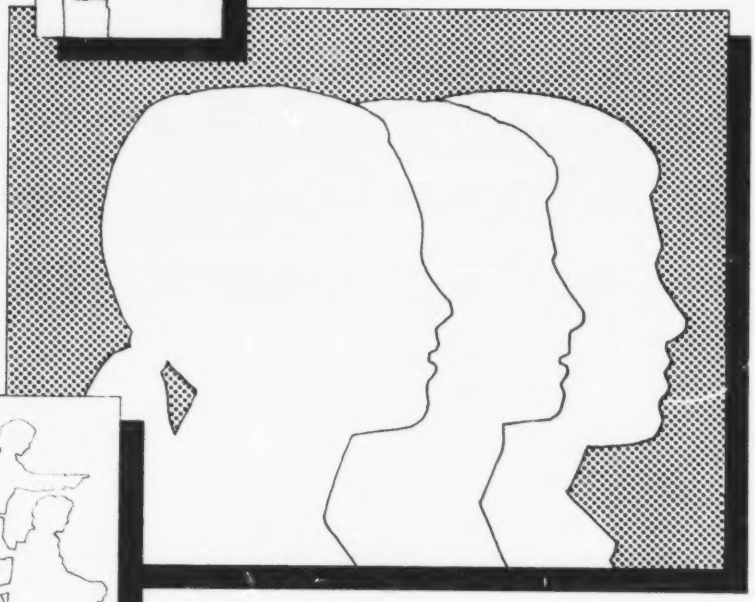
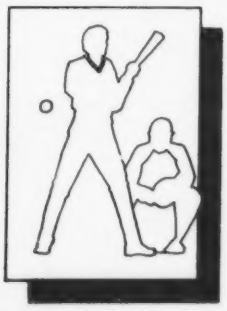
Recreation Services for Youth in Ontario



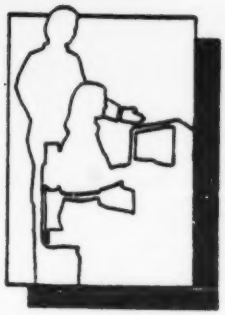






Ontario

Ministry of Tourism and Recreation



Executive Summary

Current Recreation Services for Youth

- The four major recreation providers for youth in Ontario are:
  - YM-YWCAs
  - public boards of education
  - municipal recreation departments
  - Memorial Boys and Girls Clubs (not in all communities).
- Range of programs is extensive in larger municipalities but in small and rural communities programming concentrates on sports and outdoor activities.
- Programs are aimed more at 13 to 15 year olds than 16 to 19 year olds.
- Most youth do not participate in organized programs offered by agencies.
- There are fewer recreational opportunities for youth who are:
  - disadvantaged (low income)
  - not interested in sports
  - female
  - interested in individual activities
  - ethnic
- Some municipal recreation officials feel that agencies are now paying more attention to young adults and seniors and less to youth.
- Many agencies are not aware of International Youth Year, 1985.

Future Services

- If agencies are to provide new or better services, they will need help in the areas of volunteers, money, increased collaboration, more staff, and more space/facilities

- Other groups which could be involved in providing services are:

  - youth themselves
  - a new group linking social service, recreation, and education providers
  - current groups which could change their role
  - new volunteer groups

Youth Needs and Preferences

- Study population (13 to 19) falls into 3 age groups:

  - age 13
  - 14-15
  - 16-19

- Some needs and preferences are common to all groups.

- Youth prefer a comfortable place to meet with their peers without any interference.

- Unemployment and changing family structure will have major impacts on youth needs.

- Youth welcome leadership and help but they want to be involved in decision-making.

- The development of life skills is essential

- The basic needs of youth have not changed over the last 5 years but recently they have shown an increased interest in leadership and activities where they can be responsible

Adequacy of Service

- There is a serious lack of collaboration and co-ordination among youth-serving agencies at all levels.
- Very little is provided for 16 to 19 year olds, many of whom feel they are in limbo between being teenagers and adults.
- There are a number of recreational areas for which programs or opportunities are not available or are available on a limited basis

Recommendations

- Increase the amount of collaboration among youth-serving agencies.
- Youth-serving agencies should become more proactive.
- Provincial Ministries must become more collaborative in serving youth.
- The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation should support or initiate projects which develop new approaches to improve effectiveness and efficiency in youth programming.
- The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation should not create a strong central authority or parachute projects without prior consultation.
- The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation should assume a more proactive catalyst role and develop a higher profile in this field.
- The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation should create a provincial reference group to work on improved approached to youth leadership development.
- The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation should develop a strong leisure education thrust for youth.

Acknowledgements

The nature of this study required that a great many people be consulted and involved to make it work. Wonderful co-operation was received from many youth service professionals, parents, and young people themselves who gave very unselfishly of their time and expertise to help with this effort. They were from all over the province, as well as from outside of it, and they reinforced the sense we had about how strongly people care about this area of concern. We obviously can't list them all here but are grateful for their assistance.*

We would also like to thank the field staff of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation for their input, support, direction and direct involvement in the project.

Finally, we wish to give special thanks to Bob Woodburn, Rob Lockhart and Donna Lockhart of Rethink Inc. who carried out the study. Their ingenuity, diligence. and sincere interest in the topic combined to produce what we feel is a very interesting and meaningful report.

Study Committee

Betsy Heately
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* Many of these sources are listed in Appendix C.

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Introduction

Supposedly we have been a "youth centred" culture for the past 25 years in Canada. Especially during the 60's and 70's as the baby boom developed and took shape, Canadian society became super-focused on the needs (and sometimes whims) of this generation. In recent years, a significant and perceptible shift has occurred away from youth and towards a more mature audience. That was bound to happen and was appropriate considering our changing demographics and an aging population. However, what is just beginning to become evident is that our youth population, while still a large group, is now in danger of becoming forgotten. As usual, the pendulum seems to have swung too far. Just when many youth needs and issues (unemployment for example) are becoming most acute and need to be addressed, our attention has shifted to other areas. This is true of many of our key providers of human and youth services, including recreation groups and agencies. Fortunately, a few alarms are beginning to go off and critical questions are starting to be asked by some communities and providers of youth services. That is one of the findings that has emerged from this study and the concerns it addresses.

This study came about for a number of reasons. Several years ago, the Recreation Services Branch, then located in the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, employed a full time consultant in the area of recreation for youth. When the individual who held that portfolio left the Ministry to move to a new post, that staff position was lost as part of a government-wide effort to reduce the size of the provincial civil service.

In the intervening years, the Branch and the Ministry (now Tourism and Recreation) have lost contact with many of the organizations and issues in the field of recreation for youth. With the International Youth Year (1985) approaching, and with the increasing concern that a large segment of the population may not be receiving adequate service, they felt that they should look into the current state of recreational services for youth and the anticipated needs of the next few years. From this information, an appropriate role for the Ministry (if any) could be identified.

It quickly became evident that this project had to reach beyond recreation in order to deal with the broad needs and issues of Ontario youth today. So, one objective of this study was to put the recreational needs and preferences of youth into the contert of an overall picture of youth and their significant life issues and concerns.

This study had four main purposes:

- *To present an overview of current recreation services for youth* in Ontario*
- *To determine youth needs and recreational preferences*
- *To see if there are any gaps in service and to look at how well youth serving agencies and groups are identifying and meeting the recreational needs of young people*
- *To develop recommendations that focus on the following areas:*
  - *How can the youth serving delivery system be improved to better meet the needs and preferences of youth as identified in the study?*
  - *What assistance is required for existing and potential new groups to work best? And therefore what else needs to be done -- by whom, when and how?*
  - *How can youth be helped to do more for themselves?*
  - *What can, or should the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation do? What role for 1985 and after?*

It should be stressed that the study was not after a "definitive picture" of the situation with respect to youth recreation in Ontario, but rather a broad-brush snapshot that could be used as a jumping off point for further study and planning. In this spirit, a tremendous amount of information was gathered. That information is not super detailed, but is full of details. More importantly, the quality of information and ideas was extremely high and thoroughly tested out. The process that followed really allowed for direct consultation and reaction with many authorities in this field. The authors feel confident that the basic findings and conclusions are accurate and can be trusted. The recommendations are therefore soundly based and have a broad and practicial relevance to all kinds of Ontario communities and youth settings.

This study was a stimulating and significant challenge. It had to be carried out and completed in a very brief time span (over an eight week

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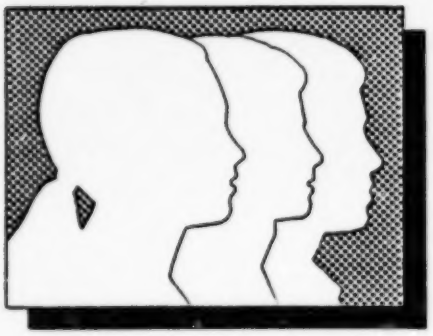
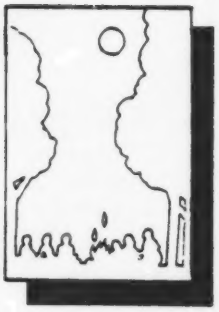
**Although the terms of reference defined youth as aged 13 to 19, there was a variety of opinion that suggested that the age or definition of youth could range from 10 to 25.*

period). Obviously, that required tremendous effort, energy and co-operation from everyone involved. People were terrific. They responded quickly and completely with quality information and creative thinking. The results and recommendations contained here reflect that fact. They affirm the importance of the Ministry's decision to initiate this project in the first place. It is a timely and needed look at an important situation and will provide the basis for some solid planning and fresh initiatives by the Ministry and other youth serving agencies throughout the province. Most importantly of all, it marks the beginning of an active attempt to ensure that recreation plays a more significant role in contributing to the quality of life of Ontario youth.



Chapter 1

SERVICES



Services

1.1 Introduction

This is an overview of the recreational services provided for youth in Ontario. It focuses on who is providing services and opportunities and generally what types of programs and facilities are available. While it gives a reliable and broad picture, it is not intended to be a definitive one. As described in Appendix A, a representative sample of agencies, informed individuals and communities were surveyed for this project.

1.2 Current Recreational Services

1.2.1 PROVIDERS

There are a great many agencies, clubs, organizations and other groups that are providing recreational services and facilities for youth in Ontario. Most are based in municipalities, providing for youth in their area. Some groups have links to provincial or national bodies. A few cater exclusively to youth (Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Boys and Girls Clubs of Ontario); others provide leisure services to the entire age spectrum. Some organizations consider recreation as a secondary mandate. They use recreational programs as a medium to offer more holistic programs intended to teach self-reliance, leadership, group dynamics and life skills development.

There appear to be four major providers of recreational services for youth in Ontario:

- *YM/YWCA's*
- *public boards of education (although their role is declining)*
- *municipal parks and recreation departments*
- *Memorial Boys and Girls Clubs*
  - *not in all communities*
  - *their role is increasing.*

There are many other groups that can be categorized as minor providers. It must be remembered that this is an overview and, in some communities, one

or more of these groups may be more prominent than average and, therefore, rank as a major provider:

- *commercial sector (providing mostly facilities):*
  - *arcades*
  - *pool halls*
  - *roller rinks*
  - *cinemas, drive-in movies*
  - *golf courses, mini-golf*
  - *arenas (in a few communities)*
  - *arts groups providing mainly lessons/skill development*
  - *non-alcoholic "pub"*

- *churches, religious groups (e.g., Christian Youth Dynamics)*
  - *churches are more prominent in rural and smaller communities*

- *libraries*

- *Girl Guides, Boy Scouts*

- *service clubs (are major providers in rural and smaller communities)*

- *separate boards of education, private schools, colleges*

- *volunteer clubs, associations, guilds:*
  - *sports groups*
  - *arts, theatre groups*
  - *stamp and coin clubs*

- *Big Brothers and Sisters*

- *social agencies (for example):*
  - *Youth of Otonabee (Peterborough)*
  - *Social and Family Services*
  - *Family Service Association of Metropolitan Toronto*

  } *often dealing more with lower socio-economic groups and troubled youth*

- *The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation (MTR):*
  - *Not every type of group that was interviewed has had an involvement with the Ministry.*
  - *For those that have, they felt that in the past there was generally quite a bit more leadership training provided and that it was available in terms of resources they could access through the Ministry.*
  - *The agencies spoke most about grant support for*

equipment and facilities (Wintario), and grants like Experience '84 to help with hiring staff for summer youth programs. They also talked about Bark Lake (Ontario Camp Leadership Centre) and the variety of leadership training services that the Ministry provides (which have been increasing recently for youth).

- *In addition to what the agencies mentioned, MTR is also involved in:*
  - *providing camping and outdoor education services;*
  - *providing programs and marketing to promote improved fitness for all ages;*
  - *support (through grants and technical assistance) of municipal recreational planning projects to help define youth needs and recommend improvement;*
  - *promotion of games and athletic/sports competition.*

1.2.2 PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

The range of recreational programs and facilities offered in medium to large municipalities is very extensive and covers, to varying degrees, virtually every conceivable activity and youth interest:

- *sports*
- *arts/crafts*
- *fitness*
- *social*
- *special events/trips*

} *for the large or small group and the individual*

In smaller and rural communities, a good deal is also being offered for youth, but the range of offerings is not as broad. There is more emphasis on sports, outdoor and natural environment opportunities. Over 90% of recreational programs are sport oriented (especially hockey and ball). Youth are also involved in scouting, guiding, and agriculturally-based recreational groups. In rural areas, most recreational programs are offered during the winter season.

Many recreational programs, especially in urban areas, are preplanned by an agency. However, many facilities are simply available for spontaneous, unscheduled use (playgrounds, outdoor pools, tennis courts, trails, nature areas, toboggan hills, soccer fields, ball diamonds, outdoor rinks).

More recreational programs are aimed at and attract the 13 to 15 year olds than is the case for the 16 to 19 year age group. There is a drop off in programs being offered and there is also a drop off in interest by the older group for organized recreational activities and group involvement. Most felt that generally the 13 to 15 year old group was quite well served

while the 16 to 19 year group was not. There are a variety of options for this, but no strong conclusions were reached in this study.

Most of the youth interviewed for this study did not participate in laid on programs offered by agencies. They said they had no time, they were too busy, they do not get their money's worth, transportation is a problem and timing of the programs that are offered sometimes is a problem.

Not as much appears to be provided for lower income and disadvantaged youth. There may be a trend here with the increasing emphasis being placed on "user pay" and higher levels of program cost-recovery. The agencies most involved with disadvantaged youth are the non-recreational social agencies.

Commercial providers and also some public agencies are becoming more interested in providing programs that are popular and generate revenue at the expense of other programs that may make less money or operate at a loss but are helping to fulfill the needs of youth.

There also appears to be less for those youth who are not interested in sports activities. This imbalance is beginning to be addressed with the introduction and promotion of more arts related types of programs providing for socialization and group interaction. It is difficult to slow the momentum built up around the provision of traditional sports programs and facilities. Another side effect of the predominance of sports opportunities, especially rugged team sports, is that more has been provided for males than females.

Also, the major providers and most recreational programs cater to teams and large groups rather than the individual or small group. Organizations like Scouts and Guides, however, do focus more on small groups and the individual with their mandate of teaching youth self-reliance.

Most programs and facilities are not geared to the unique leisure interests of ethnic groups. However, there are some exceptions. Several inner-city Toronto schools are providing youth programs that relate to continuing education, youth centres, and special offerings for large immigrant and ethnic populations. It also appears that the non-recreational groups and agencies are responding best to these newly identified preferences and needs.

1.2.3 OTHER RELATED PROGRAMS

Some agencies with a primary recreation mandate and many of the other agencies with recreation as their secondary or lower mandate, are providing programs that focus on leadership training, self-reliance, life skills development and continuing education for youth. A few agencies have

developed leadership corps and job corps with recreation as a key element of some of those programs. Economic development organizations and the Junior Achievement organization are two examples.

The Community Economic Development Strategy

One of these related programs is the Community Development Corporation (CDC), many of which were organized in the United States in the 1960's and in Canada in the 1970's with the objective of strengthening the local community and building up new resources. These corporations are organized and controlled by local residents to develop the economy of their own community. Many CDC's are geared to youth, particularly those who have left school and are unemployed.

In the Toronto area, there are a number of economic development organizations that have been successful. For example:

- LEARNXS Foundation Inc. (1974)
  - has founded a successful publishing house (LEARNXS Press)
  - the Foundation has worked closely with the Toronto Board of Education

- The Student Employment Experience Centre Project (SEEC)
  - operated a restaurant, a catering business, and a woodcraft manufacturing/furniture refinishing/paper recycling enterprise
  - a teacher was assigned to the workplace to provide basic literacy, upgrading and life skills

- Youth Venture Developments of Metro Toronto (1978)
  - established a new wholly owned company called Youth Venture Recycling Inc.
  - the York Board of Education provided a teacher who served as an academic and life skills coach in the workplace

- The Learning Enrichment Foundation (LEF)
  - established in 1978 in the City of York
  - devoted to youth employment, child care services, and multicultural arts enrichment
  - some current projects for youth include:
    - Weston Road Renovations
    - York Wood Works II
    - Illustrious Renovations
    - Artists in Residence (vacant space in schools is provided free to artists and craft persons in

exchange for arts enrichment activities to supplement the educational curriculum)

- LEF Players (a multicultural theatre troupe that visits schools, hospitals, day centres and recreational facilities)

There is additional potential to expand this largely self-supporting type of program to provide more employment, educational, recreational and total life skills training and opportunities for youth.

Junior Achievement

The Junior Achievement program is providing services similar to those of some of the CDC's described, except the JA programs are short-term and education oriented. They are not interested in creating continuous employment. The 14 to 19 year old participants gain insights into the workings of business and explore their own potential and ambitions. The programs operate companies of 12 to 20 students for 7 months and work through the entire corporate cycle. Over 100,000 Canadian teenagers have gone through the program in the past three decades.

1.3 Past Level of Service

Most agencies perceive they are generally providing a similar level of overall service as in the past 5 to 10 years. Some specific programs have been reduced or eliminated -- others have been expanded or introduced. Some programs have been modified to integrate new and current interests.

Some agencies, particularly the boards of education, were able to provide more programs for youth in the past. They cite reduced provincial funding for non-credit courses and an aging pool of teachers* as two key reasons for service cutbacks. It seems that when teachers were younger, they were generally more interested in leading extra curricular programs and had more energy to put into those largely volunteer initiatives. Recent changes in provincial funding has meant that most boards are now unable to provide non-credit courses -- the enrichment programs and community schools.

At the same time, there is a reluctance on the part of most teachers to permit volunteers from the community to come into the schools and coach, provide arts and shops training and the like, to help fill the gap. That

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* The London Board of Education has predicted that, by 1992, the average age of teachers will be 53.

view is often not shared by the top administrators in the school boards. In some jurisdictions, community volunteers are able to help fill the gap by providing leadership in a wide variety of clubs (non-sport) where the teachers used to participate. School officials are having a difficult time shifting their thinking in this area.

Some agencies and groups indicated that they have been able to increase their level of service to youth over the past 5 to 10 years. One group that is expanding significantly in many communities is The Boys and Girls Clubs of Ontario.

On balance though, particularly with fewer youth to serve (in the 13-16 age group) now than 10 years ago, the level of recreational services is perceived by most to have remained relatively the same. However, some of the municipal recreation officials wondered if the traditional youth serving agencies are beginning to pay less attention to children and youth as increasing emphasis is now being placed on serving young adults and seniors. In the 1950's and 60's, children and youth received almost all of their attention. Has this shift in emphasis resulted in many agencies not keeping up with youth needs and interests? Very little data is available to check out these concerns.

1.4 Expected Future Level of Service

Most groups expect to be providing about the same overall level of service in the next 3 to 5 years. Some would provide more if additional, suitable resources were available. However, many schools boards (not all) feel they will be offering less than today.

A few agencies, especially the "Y", Scouts and Guides, perceive they will be offering some different services in reaction to changing preferences. For example:

- *leadership development*
- *life skills development*
- *opportunities for special kinds of employment and career-oriented activities, and*
- *a more individually oriented focus on health and physical activity initiatives.*

The Scouts and Guides will also be trying to attract more 13 and 14 year olds as part of their move to re-focus.

The Memorial Boys and Girls Club in London has plans to become more proactive in encouraging youth to participate in their 1984 summer day camps. They are providing more active encouragement and they are lowering the fee to reduce the cost barrier. The Club is able to do this because

they have a grant to help offset costs. This is an example of where provincial or federal assistance can be very beneficial.

International Year of Youth (1985)

All groups who were interviewed were asked about the upcoming International Year of Youth. A number had not heard about it yet. Once they were introduced to it, most felt that they would do something, depending on what financial resources were available.

Most Y's and Katimavik* are already getting organized with special programs, events and other projects. Katimavik have three specific projects organized for next year. They are going to be working on a province-wide tree planting program; a project to provide better fitness centres for youth; and a third project that involves providing better quality and more accessible youth centres.

Most groups felt that any initiatives for 1985 should continue afterward.

1.5 Do Agencies Require Any Help?

Agencies and groups who presently provide recreational services for youth were asked if they felt they needed any help to carry on what they were doing.

Most groups and agencies felt they are able to provide existing services without help. However, if new or better services are to be provided, they would welcome help, particularly in the following areas:

- volunteers
- more money (usually operating funds)
- increased collaboration
- more staff, and
- more space/facilities.

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* KATIMAVIK is a national youth service program operated by OPCAN, a private, non-profit corporation funded by the Secretary of State of Canada. Katimavik recruits volunteers -- young people between the ages of 17 and 21, called participants -- for nine month periods. Volunteers travel to three different regions of Canada in which, for three months at a time, they live in groups and work on community projects. They receive room and board, plus a $1,000. honourarium at the end of their work period.

They need help at the local level; they do not want capital projects "flown in". Also, they felt they needed to better understand the gaps in service in each of their communities. They believed they require more information and that there needs to be more dialogue within their own communities and across the province.

The boards of education were the only agencies that reported that they require help to provide existing levels of recreational service for youth.

1.6 Potential Groups

One of the objectives of the study was to explore whether there are other groups that could become involved in providing recreational services for youth. The groups and agencies interviewed for the study offered a variety of suggestions, most of which have not been tested or checked out as the scope of this project did not permit such evaluation.

The following suggestions were the more widely supported of the list:

- Youth can do more for themselves (more detail will be provided later in this section).

- There could be a different and much improved "link-up" between social service, recreational and educational providers. The results would be: i) better communication of mandates, programs, services and ideas; ii) a move toward less duplication and less over-servicing in certain areas and for particular youth sub-groups; iii) a co-operative effort to better identify and fill the gaps in service; iv) more specialization for some groups with others giving up some things as well; and v) an improved utilization of collective resources.

- Some groups could modify their role and change specific program and service offerings to better meet youth needs. That may also involve developing a better approach to awareness raising aimed at the sub-groups they are trying to reach. Several groups are already beginning to make these shifts and improve their "marketing" approach. Many other groups, however, seem not to have thought about it and certainly have not begun to change "with the times" as required. Some groups appear to be better able to be responsive. Some of the most responsive groups are those without a primary mandate to provide recreational services, while many of the traditional agencies who have a primary mandate (like municipal parks and recreation departments) seem to be unwilling or unable to be proactive and evaluate their role and services.

- *Some suggested that new volunteer groups could be formed to provide required programs and meet identified needs or groups in need. This would be in response to any identified gaps in service. One specific suggestion was that volunteer groups could be formed to pick up the slack from reduced after school programs.*

- *There was also a good deal of discussion about what role the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation could play to assist the provision of recreational services for youth. As the project progressed, a number of strong suggestions began to emerge and receive a good deal of dialogue. They will be discussed in Chapter 4 under Recommendations.*

There were a few more ideas that were mentioned once or twice. They are not necessarily less feasible; it is just that they did not receive as widespread discussion as the above concepts:

- *new roles for the commercial sector*
  - *e.g., more youth programs in racquet and curling clubs*

- *could be a modified role for minor sports where there is more emphasis on non-contact, strictly recreational/fun types of involvement*
  - *to better accommodate a wider range of abilities, physical attributes and preferences*

- *other service clubs could get involved with youth*

- *museums could take a larger role in some communities*

Youth Can Do More For Themselves

There was unanimous agreement that, given the chance, youth could do lots of things for themselves and each other. Youth require a variety of opportunities for more creative and direct involvement. They need a participatory role in deciding what they should be involved in, where and how. Adult leadership is important and it must be of a facilitating nature -- helping youth to work through their decisions and guiding them as they participate in carrying out their own objectives. There needs to be a true sharing partnership. It is important for young people to see it as "their own thing". Therefore, youth require some different kinds of leisure counselling, education and awareness raising. They need also to actually be in charge and equally involved in planning and decision making.

Youth welcome some structure and good leadership. They need places to go that relate to their preferences and values. They also require a set of

guidelines to give them direction and a flexible framework in which to operate.

The pendulum swing from a lot of structure and laid on leadership by adults in the 50's, to very little structure and direct leadership in the 70's, is now moving back toward a more middle position.

Many said that youth do not need a lot of dollars, but they do need friends. If they do not have friends, they are really hurting and lost. So much of the significant youth recreation and patterns happen around relationships that everything possible should be done to facilitate this option, especially letting young people structure and operate their own responses to this need. Given the opportunity, support and responsibility, they will do a great job of it themselves.

Both professionals and young people themselves showed a great deal of optimism and faith in youths' ability to respond and carry this type of thing off.

Chapter 2

YOUTH NEEDS AND PREFERENCES

Youth Needs and Preferences

2.1 Introduction

From the outset of this project it became clear that it would be difficult to separate the broad general needs of youth from more specific recreational ones. Therefore, the information gathered has been presented in two categories: i) broad needs of youth, and ii) recreational needs and preferences (general and specific).

All individuals interviewed, whether youth, parent, or recreational professional, found needs hard to articulate. What is important, however, is that youth reinforced what the professionals said about their needs.

It is also apparent that "sub-groups" exist within the broad category of youth aged 13 to 19 years. The main sub-groups can be defined on the basis of age, sex, school status, employment status, socio-economic status, ethnicity, location (rural/urban), and leisure interests.

While the scope of this project did not allow for specific information on each sub-group, we were able to determine that there are clear distinctions based on age. The concensus was that youth fall into three age categories:

- age 13
- 14 to 15 years of age
- 16 to 19 years of age

It was determined that although there are subtle differences in needs between the age groups, there are also some needs "common" to all youth. A few of these examples are:

- a need for spontaneity and peer group recognition
- help to sort out available opportunities and clarify values pertaining to leisure
- a strong need for fresh responses to the changing leisure tastes of young people
  - for example, places like Ontario Place and Harbourfront are a big hit with youth with their blend of public,

entrepreneurial and private offerings. Also, ideas like "Sugars", a non-alcoholic pub in London, Ontario has struck a chord that basically says "the more you treat us like adults, the more we like it". This notion was strongly reinforced by many youth interviewed for the study.

It has become obvious that there has not been enough research or study in the area of youth recreational needs and preferences. Three current studies were of considerable help with this project -- Dr. Don Offord's Ottawa Project, the City of York 1983 "Youth Needs Survey". and the Youth Needs Assessment from the Malton Community Council, which will be finished in the near future. The City of North York is also working on a needs study but finalized data is not yet available. Two aspects of the North York study present an interesting perspective. This study indicated that youth age 17 to 19 years did not perceive that they have leisure time. Sixty percent of the youth interviewed also indicated they had no free time. This certainly raises a new question -- that being how youth view recreation and leisure. The study also revealed that many youth seem to view recreation as simply one aspect of their life. They perhaps do not see it as being as critically important as the "profession" views it. However, that begs the question of how clearly they have thought it through and how much opportunity they have had to think about it.

2.2 Broad Needs of Youth

There is a large range of basic things common to all youth. Some of these relate to needs, while some have to do more with patterns and preferences. Some key items have to do with the need for:

- fun
- excitement
- challenge
- adventure

There was a strong need to have:

- socializing opportunities
- relationships and friends
- recognition and peer support
- chances to improve/enhance self confidence
- leadership opportunities
- a chance to be in charge
- self-directed learning
- less structure
- more places to gather that are really "theirs"

In other words, they prefer a comfortable place to meet their peers without hassle; opportunities to experiment and try new things; and a strong sense of belonging.

It became apparent that many of the identified trends today, like unemployment and changing family structure, will have a major impact on youth needs. Unemployment in particular, is seen to have the greatest effect in a number of areas.

Some professionals have indicated that there are a growing number of youth who have never held a part-time job, particularly in lower socio-economic and immigrant areas. This means that many skills that are often acquired during part-time job experiences will have to be secured elsewhere. On the other hand, Ontario Education Minister Bette Stephenson, in an article that appeared May 4, 1984 in the Peterborough Examiner, cited that in the last 25 years, the percentage of 16 year olds attending high school and working part-time has increased from 4 percent to 30 percent. Well over 50 percent of all high school students now have part-time jobs. She did not support the view that part-time work was necessary in order to support the family.

Dr. Saul Levine, professor of Psychiatry of the University of Toronto, has identified eight emotional stages suffered by youth who are unemployed:

- *boredom*
- *apathy and withdrawal*
- *negative sense of identity*
- *low self-esteem*
- *demoralization and alienation*
- *guilt and shame*
- *anxiety and fear*
- *anger and depression*

Unemployment in youth also results in increasing levels of stress and potentially large amounts of unused, unfulfilled time and energy. It has also been observed that greater numbers of youth are giving up on government employment centres and perceive government as overly bureaucratic and noneffective.

It has been suggested that recreation can play an important role in skill and leadership development, life skills counselling and programming to reduce stress. A growing number of youth are signing up for leadership courses and joining leadership corps which support the contention that many youth want to take responsibility, gain more control, and simply be involved.

There are some sub-groups, however, whose needs may be more acute. Dr. Don Offord's work with disadvantaged youth raised concern about financial barriers inhibiting participation in sports programs and skill acquisition.

These kids were far behind others in terms of skill level, competence and confidence. But, it was found that when disadvantaged youth were actively encouraged to participate, they were able to both develop high levels of skill and stay involved with the program. This raises points about the need for some to have an earlier start, risk in a safer environment and have opportunities that relate initially to lower skill and commitment levels. The City of York research also supported the fact that immigrant and socio-economically disadvantaged youth have a very slow start in recreational skills and attitude development. This lends support to the fact that some youth sub-groups need a different approach to the servicing of their needs.

In the City of York, creative ways have been considered that would mesh skill development, basic education and recreation. It was suggested that basic literacy programs could be integrated with leisure interests. For example, steel or reggae bands could be utilized as a medium for development of literacy skills.

In overview, it was felt that the basic needs of youth have been the same for many years -- needing friends, growth experiences, etc., and that these are going to continue. Certain needs emerge from time to time as more acute, while preferences shift and evolve more frequently.

2.3 Recreational Needs

2.3.1 GENERAL

Those interviewed indicated that broad recreational needs included things like the form which recreation opportunities should take, the nature of the program, the level of instruction and the environments within which they occur. For example, many discussed the need for opportunities that are spontaneous, free-flowing and unstructured. They also talked about the need for more non-competitive, co-ed opportunities. Youth need challenge and stimulation through an increased variety of experiences. And they need good chances to learn and grow through casual, non-threatening situations.

There was affirmation that youth would welcome leadership and help from a facilitating standpoint. They want a place to go where they can assist in establishing guidelines, determining what the program should look like and partake in the operation of the program. Skill development to do this along with leadership training and opportunities were prominent needs.

It was felt that increased stress or anxiety brought about by unemployment and changes in family structure will be a significant issue for youth. To

balance this, the identified need for more passive recreational opportunities was highlighted. Also, the need for general "life skills" in order to adapt to ongoing pressures, gain employment or be ready to help with service, was considered essential.

One noteworthy difference between urban and rural youth was the need for exposure to a wider spectrum of recreation activities for rural youth. The vast majority of recreational opportunities for youth in rural communities are sport oriented, an impression drawn from recent Ministry of Tourism and Recreation studies on rural communities in the Peterborough district. Urban youth seem to have the wider spectrum but not necessarily the information system to access the opportunities.

Another identified need was for the development of more individualized pursuits. In the past, emphasis on team or group sports activities predominated. The need to do something by oneself, like body building, seems to be increasingly important to youth today. Some agencies are already re-focusing their efforts in this type of area. The recent growth in youth "clubs" reinforces individualized needs.

2.3.2 SPECIFIC PREFERENCES

During the interviews, a number of specific recreational preferences were identified. These were programs such as:

- *teen dances*
- *computer games*
- *movies*
- *music*
- *fitness/sport/exercise*
- *summer centres/clubs*
- *cultural recreation/arts*
- *clubs*

These perhaps best highlight the preferences of youth or the "fads" of today. The youth who played chess years ago have been replaced by youth interested in computers and video games. Music, dances and sport have long been interests of youth. Only the type of dancing and music have changed. Break dancing has recently replaced the disco dancing of yesterday. It is felt that special event programming is important for youth and could be geared to specific sub-groups of youth. Exposure to wilderness camping and adventure pursuits are becoming important as more youth are urbanized. As mentioned earlier, there is growth in leadership and leadership corps activities, many of which are peer led or directed. A strong need for self-directed leadership opportunities has emerged.

Recent work in Malton revealed that females prefer arts and crafts activities, pursuits geared to individuals rather than teams, and activity

clubs geared to a specific interest area. Agency interviews also indicated that females as a youth sub-group were not well served.

2.4 The Past and the Future

The information gathered indicates that the basic needs of youth have not changed notably over the past five years. Youth will continue to require recognition, friends, socialization and identity. There has been an increase in anxiety due to family break-up and structural change, as well as unemployment. This increase in stress is likely to place even greater importance on meeting basic needs. The importance of friends to share problems, concerns and life experiences will continue to play a significant part in young people's lives.

Youth also need help in skill development in order to participate in many of the newer, more complex activities. Many video games are becoming too complicated for most youth and therefore their participation has decreased. The development of opportunities to improve skill level so that youth can participate in the great range of activities that exist, is necessary.

Recently, youth have shown a greater interest in leadership and activities where they can be responsible. Youth are indicating a need and preference for leadership training opportunities, many of which are youth directed. There is a growing awareness that, given some guidance and direction, youth can do much more for themselves. A significant growth in the number of youth entering volunteer positions supports this.

The basic <u>needs</u> of youth will remain the same in the future. Unemployment is perceived to be the major issue that will be facing youth in the next five years. There will also be continued anxiety relative to the family and the changes taking place within it. The cost to participate and summer months with little to do will continue to pose problems, particularly for unemployed youth. Youth are seen by some as "more serious" today. Perhaps this is due to the "goals of life" being more elusive and the fact that they are facing a more uncertain future than did youth ten years ago.

Although there is a very wide variety of recreational opportunities generally available for youth today, the predominance of sport programs and facilities will have to be offset by an increased emphasis on arts and cultural opportunities and programs and recreational/social environments that support relaxation and more passive activities. Some agencies and groups will have to increase their role in these areas, especially since a

major provider like the boards of education will be cutting back their involvement in all leisure activities for youth, particularly the arts. If the "arts" credit is not taken until Grade 11, the chances of that area becoming a significant life interest are greatly reduced. It is felt by some authorities that much more emphasis will be placed on the mandatory credits and that "fast-tracking" is going to change the leisure habits/preferences of people. There will be fewer young people in extracurricular/intramural programs. They will be far busier (with school/work) and have less time to become involved. Similarly, there are likely to be more youth at summer school to complete credits. With this "withdrawal" from the arts, many feel we could be heralding an "Arts Deprivation Syndrome" which not only may be unhealthy for living and coping well, but may also be inappropriate for doing well. There are tremendous implications for other agencies in the community as well as for youth, parents and families (patterns, time availability, etc.) with regard to leisure awareness, skills and needs.*

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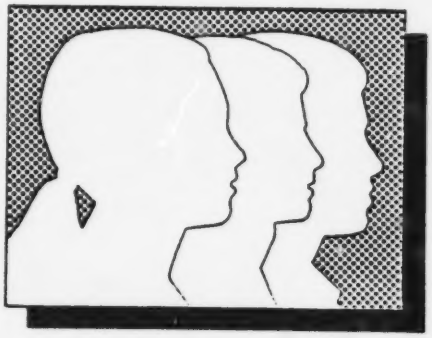
* *The Ontario Ministry of Education has indicated in their O.S.I.S. document that schools will be restricting the kinds of credits taken and will only be offering one compulsory art credit, which does not have to be taken until Grade 11.*



Chapter 3

ADEQUACY OF SERVICE PROVISION

Adequacy of Service Provision

3.1 Introduction

This part of the report presents the conclusions and other findings on the nature of the "fit" between what is being and will be provided for youth now and in the near future and what is known about their needs and preferences. How well are youth serving agencies and groups at all levels identifying and meeting the needs of young people and the issues facing them, particularly their recreational needs? What is not being done well enough? What are the gaps in service? Who is being missed? What barriers exist to block some young people from the recreational opportunities they require?

3.2 Leisure Delivery System

On the surface, many professionals perceived that recreational needs and preferences are being responded to quite well. At the same time, however, there was an uneasiness; a sense that probably something was missing -- that things were not as good as they hoped. Initially, there was no clear notion about exactly what needs are being missed and what the most important issues are. Overall, there was also no clear idea or vision about what role recreation can or ought to play in meeting the broader needs of youth.

After some moderate probing, however, most of the professionals interviewed began to identify a few groups that are not being well served. They began to see important programs and opportunities that are either not being provided or are not being provided well enough or widely enough. Missed opportunities and unfortunate competition for the most lucrative markets were identified and discussed. It became clear that there was a serious lack of collaboration and co-ordination among youth serving agencies, particularly in the areas of planning, research, information sharing and program provision. This was true at the municipal level where most services and opportunities are provided. It was also the case at the provincial and federal levels where ministries and departments take a piecemeal, fragmented approach when dealing with youth. Everyone is burying their head in the sand. Each has "the answer" for their mandate.

But each young person covers more than one mandate (health, employment, education, recreation, etc.). Needs overlap and agency responses need to as well.

It soon became clear that agency professionals were more informed about the broad needs of youth, community youth issues and concerns and gaps in service than they thought. When they were brought together their collective discussion generated surprising results. The conclusion is that a good deal of knowledge and information is already known or available and good solutions can be developed when the most informed people are brought together to pool their ideas and information in any community.

What may be needed is a process to organize and direct that activity toward conclusions about youth needs, solutions and a plan of action. What would also be beneficial is some additional good quality up-to-date base data on youth needs and preferences that goes beyond what was uncovered in this study to provide background for community-specific dialogue. This local discussion, however, should not wait for the research results before it is initiated. There is no doubt that a similar process is required at the provincial and national level to facilitate collective discussion about youth needs and a more integrated response from each ministry and department.

3.3 Some Sub-Groups are not as Well Served

The research identified a number of sub-groups of youth whose recreational needs and preferences appear generally to be less well provided for than the youth population as a whole. Detailed study will further test these general impressions and may identify more specific recreational needs and preferences as well as any barriers to participation. Further research and discussion should also point to some solutions.

3.3.1 OLDER YOUTH (AGED 16 TO 19 YEARS)

Public and quasi-public agencies provide very little for this group. The commercial sector has responded best to meeting some of their recreational requirements and has shifted emphasis as required in reaction to changing preferences. Many young people in this age group are busier with school and part-time jobs. Many also seem bored and somewhat lost. Some talked about a state of limbo between being a teenager and an adult, with few recreational opportunities relating well to this "in-between" status.

A sub-group of youth within this age group are those who are out of school. Many of those people are also unemployed. This appears to be the hardest group to reach and to understand. They no longer have any link to

recreational and social opportunities in the school and most municipal recreation programs appear to respond very poorly to the 16 to 19 year old generally, and especially to those out of school.

3.3.2. FEMALES

Although more opportunities are available today for females than 10 to 20 years ago, many recreation professionals perceive that there is less available for female teenagers than for males, especially for those girls who have no interest in sports. Recent studies indicate that the majority of females prefer arts and crafts, special activity clubs, activities of a more passive nature and activities for the individual rather than a large group or team. Both assumptions require further focused study for more conclusive confirmation.

3.3.3 MALES WHO ARE NOT INTERESTED IN SPORTS

There is some indication from discussion with recreation professionals and young people as well as from an examination of program offerings and available facilities that male youth who are not interested in sports activities are being overlooked. The predominance of sports programs and facilities may in itself be artificially creating a demand and attacting some participation for reluctant youth that have other interests that cannot be met or may not have had a chance to be encouraged and developed. Providers must be careful not to equate rates of participation directly with demand. It is easier to provide more of the same than to test whether something different is preferred.

3.3.4 ETHNIC YOUTH

Many youth from ethnic families, especially newcomers to Canada, have preferences and values many of which do not relate well if at all to the recreational programs offered in the community and the type of participation and involvement that is required. For example, West Indian females are not allowed to participate in recreational programs because of their different cultural values. Where populations are large enough, individual cultural communities have established their own clubs and social/recreational programs which may or may not reach their youth. Recreational professionals need to learn more about the preferences and culturally rooted values of at least the larger ethnic groups. Although some attempts have been successfully made, there is room for more initiatives. It is not that the research is difficult, but rather that few agencies have attempted to understand and help.

3.3.5 ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

A good deal has already been reported on this group in Chapters One and Two. In summary, financial constraints and less self-directed initiatives have resulted in many youth from poor families having a slower start and less skill development than others of a similar age. Most recreational programs are based on the need for higher skill levels. Attempts at integration have been very poorly done if at all. Economically disadvantaged youth require easier programs at the beginning, vigorous encouragment and ongoing assistance to start and stick in recreational programs. When this is done (which is seldom) most participants catch up quickly and then are able to do well. More effort and different approaches are required by traditional recreation agencies.

Most of the youth interviewed for this study and for other current studies, said that a good many of the recreational programs and facilities that they wanted to utilize were too expensive. Across the board, the cost to participate has increased significantly in recent years. It was one of the most significant barriers reported by young people.

Many young people living in large urban areas like Metropolitan Toronto have few resources. It is more than not having enough money. Many have no family back up, their housing is poor and there is little employment. A number of people interviewed for this study felt that the situation has reached a critical stage and may "blow up" in the next couple of years. Some people looked at recreation and the role it could play. They saw it as a diversion and outlet, as well as an opportunity to provide alternative activities (positive and growthful). It could help to make life more enjoyable, and it could help create a safety net made up of a peer group support network. Recreational programs and leadership opportunities could be the catalyst to bring people together to form the basis for this support network.

3.3.6 LATCH-KEY KIDS

This is the growing group who have to go directly home after school and stay in their home alone until their parent or parents return from work. These young people seldom are able to participate in after-school recreational or social activities. This situation must receive more attention; we must learn how to reach this group and help where required.

3.3.7 THE INDIVIDUALIST

Some young people are not interested in getting involved with teams and large groups. Most recreational programs are based on large group participation and much less is available for youth who want activities for

the individual and small group. It is not known, however, if sufficient opportunities for this group are available. A societal trend toward increased individualism in many aspects of life (work, leisure, family) is gaining momentum and could require that more programs and facilities be geared to the individual and small group through all age levels. Focused study is required here to examine the current situation and analyze the expected impact on this trend.

3.3.8 RURAL YOUTH

Many believe that youth living in rural areas are under served. Although the variety of recreational opportunities is less than in urban areas, and sometimes programs and facilities are less sophisticated, there may be more opportunity for higher quality, meaningful involvement. Programs and facilities are usually more accessible and sometimes less costly in rural communities leading to higher percentages of participation. There is no doubt, however, that in most rural communities, the dominance of sports opportunities is more acute than in most urban areas to the detriment of the arts and opportunities for females.

3.4 Gaps in Opportunities and Programs

Although much is being provided through a wide variety of programs and facilities by many agencies and groups, many youth are still bored and not involved. There is a significant misfit, especially for the sub-groups identified in Section 3.3. It is clear that we will never be able to fully meet all of the expectations of youth (or any other age group) for leisure activities, but many recreational professionals and research studies point to a number of program or activity gaps that we can begin to plug. The first step is to identify where services can be improved. It may be that even when all of the programs and leisure opportunities are taken together, they are still not meeting some of the basic needs of youth and are not connecting well enough with their ever changing preferences.

Below is a list of the most notable programs and opportunities that were identified as either missing in many communities or are not well enough or widely enough provided:

- *Arts activities*
  - *creative and performing*
  - *more arts opportunities are currently available than previously, but more are required, especially for the beginner and for youth*
  - *one of the main providers for youth (the board of education) is decreasing its role*

- *if other agencies or the non-public sector do not pick up the slack and further expand these opportunities, the gap will increase*
- *as mentioned, arts opportunities are generally more deficient in rural areas*

- *Passive/relaxation opportunities*
  - *encouragement to participate in non-active recreation*
  - *opportunities for spontaneous involvement*

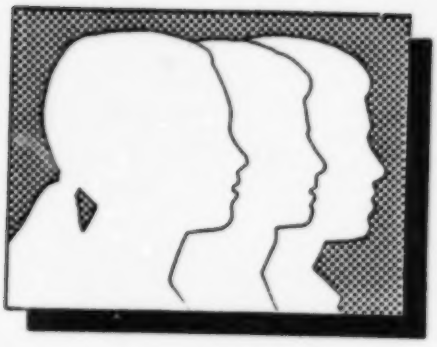
- *Self-directed opportunities*
  - *participant motivated*
  - *youth require leisure education assistance to help clarify their interests, identify outlets and become better self-starters*
  - *youth need to be further encouraged to help each other (more youth leading youth)*
  - *the role of the adult leader and leadership techniques can and should be modified to relate to current youth values and needs (refer to Chapter Two and Section 1.6)*

- *Life skills development*
  - *as with leisure education, more opportunities are required for total life skills education*
  - *a more holistic concept with recreation as an essential element is needed*
  - *recreation activities and leadership roles can act as one medium for teaching and experiencing many life skills*

- *Employment training*
  - *a high profile and critical issue and need that may or may not be integrated into recreational services*

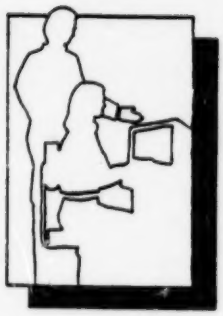
- *Youth centres*
  - *young people still need a "place", but a different one from the youth centres of the 70's*
  - *they require more of "their" input in decision making and programming -- they want to manage and be responsible for their facilities and programs*
  - *youth have a different "time clock" than most agencies for when their centres should be open*

- *Shorter term programs*
  - *one or a few sessions rather than 10 or more*
  - *provide more flexibility, encouragement to try new activities*



Chapter 4

RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendations

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a variety of thoughts and suggestions that are relevant (to varying degrees) to every community and every agency or group providing recreation services for youth in Ontario. These recommendations evolved out of the analysis of services, needs and preferences -- the adequacy of service provision. They include many of the suggestions that came from recreationists and other professionals as well as the young people that were interviewed for this study. There are obviously things that need to be done to better identify youth needs and issues; to provide recreational opportunities that more completely meet the full range of needs and preferences; and to find ways to deal more effectively with the broader issues facing youth from a recreational perspective.

The recommendations are organized under four headings:

- *The leisure delivery system*
- *Advocacy*
- *Studies and research*
- *A potential role for the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation*

4.2 The Leisure Delivery System

There are two principle recommendations for the leisure delivery system:

i) Increase the amount of collaboration and direct link-ups among agencies and groups that are providing recreational and other services for youth.

ii) Youth serving agencies, especially those with a strong recreation mandate must become more proactive.

Within every community, all agencies and groups that provide for youth must work together more closely. Mandates and services should be better integrated. Information and ideas could be shared regularly. This should

be a long term effort with the main goals of working collaboratively to:

- *identify and meet the needs of groups that have been missed or are under-served in their community;*
- *fill program and facility gaps for all youth in their community; and*
- *improve efficiency (maximize resources) and effectiveness (provide better services).*

With agencies working together, mandates and programs will be better understood and there should be more communication and information sharing. This could result in more specialization for some groups as they find the areas to which they are best suited. Some groups may also need to give up some roles and services in a move toward collective efficiency.

This increased agency collaboration can be further reinforced by encouraging dialogue at the grass roots level. This would involve parents, volunteers and young people. Eventually a task force could be established in every community to include representation from agencies and volunteer groups that provide service as well as from parents and youth. The task force could be an advocate for youth, help to encourage continued agency collaboration, continuously monitor changing youth preferences and issues, and address many other related roles.

At the same time, it is imperative that all of the provincial ministries involved with youth also work together more collaboratively. In Section 4.5, an immediate effort will be recommended to initiate this improved link-up. This should be considered as a long term commitment to dialogue, information sharing and to the development of more comprehensive and compatible policies for youth in Ontario.

To help communities assess local youth needs, preferences, issues and gaps in service, it is recommended that a straightforward process and simple assessment tool be developed. This would provide direction for collecting and analyzing informed opinion, existing data and any required new information. The intent would be to provide a quick, broad-brush view that would be efficient and clear. The process should also deal with how to get started on practical, action-oriented solutions. The whole exercise must be straightforward, pragmatic and able to be done by local personnel.

It is also recommended that school boards, school staff and officials become much more open to allowing volunteers from the community to come into the schools and provide leadership in after school sports programs, arts programs, shops and clubs. If teachers are less willing or unable to provide leadership in these extracurricular activities, they should not block others who want to help provide needed programs.

Better links could be forged between school boards and an agency like the "Y". For example, it may be possible for students to take a "Y" program like Royal Life Saving, water safety or the coaching development program for a physical education credit. In some schools there is already a Grade 12 credit course for volunteers.

As part of the collaborative effort in each community, it is suggested that the most promising suggestions for other groups and agencies that could possibly become involved in providing recreational services for youth be followed up and checked out. The initial list of suggestions contained in Section 1.6 can be used as a starting point.

It has become evident that many youth serving agencies and groups have become complacent and are waiting for youth to come to them and "report" that different or better services are required. Unfortunately, youth are often too fragmented to operate as a pressure group to force a response and change. So, agencies have a responsibility to take the initiative and analyze what they collectively are doing and whether they are being as effective as possible. They must challange themselves and other agencies as well.

A final key area of recommendation relating to the provision of services is that the support system for community agencies and groups providing recreational services to youth requires some improvement. Below are four aspects of the support system that were highlighted.

(i) Grants/Funding

This is an area that requires considerable additional thought. The system of grants (capital, operating, other) from all sources to youth serving agencies should be examined in depth to see if changes, particularly in emphasis and delivery are now required.

Many agencies discussed the need for assistance with ongoing operating costs. In an effort to keep the cost to the participant as low as possible, some agencies indicated that they were so busy raising funds that their ability to provide their services is being undermined. They are becoming fund raisers rather than recreationists and leaders.

Many agencies suggested that operating grants may now be more required than capital grants. They were also critical of short term grants that made long range planning impossible. At the same time, however, caution should be exercised not to create dependencies on operating grants.

In any community, grants for operations, planning and capital should be designed to encourage as much agency collaboration and co-operation as possible.

Decisions about what grant funds will be used for should be made at the local/community level. There was much criticism of projects that were "parachuted in" from the Province or anywhere else.

(ii) Resource Materials

There is a need for more resource materials such as books, films, workbooks and other how-to-do-it and promotional/awareness raising aids. These resources can come from many sources including community groups and agencies. The audience should be both youth serving agencies and young people themselves. Refer to Recommendation 4.5.3.4 on page 36.

(iii) Leadership Training

This is an area of assistance that is still vitally important. It became clear from this study that the type of leadership that youth require is evolving as discussed in Section 1.6. Youth welcome some structure and good leadership where they can assume a significant participatory role -- a partnership in decision making and program provision.

The leadership training programs that many agencies are heavily involved with must keep pace with the evolving needs and preferences of young people for the type of leadership that they will identify with and to which they will respond positively.

(iv) Special Projects

There is a continual need for innovative projects that test new concepts and programs, act as a catalyst to encourage other new initiatives and that try out unique facility and management concepts (like youth-run centres).

4.3 Advocacy

Throughout this project, there was a very clear message -- no one is speaking for youth and they are in danger of becoming a lost group. Many believe that if there is no pressure or call for help, nothing significant will be done. Since most recreation agencies do not take a proactive role, it is likely that very little will be done to better meet youth needs.

As the 13 to 19 year age group becomes a proportionately (and absolutely) smaller group, the voice of the adult, especially middle aged and older adults, may be heard more and the voice of youth less.*

The advocacy role must be performed on two levels: i) local or community and ii) provincial. Involvement at only one level will produce few results and will not be sustaining. A local infrastructure must be well established before links can be made with provincial activities. A two way flow will then be possible between the two levels.

At the provincial (policy) level, all ministries who have a youth mandate need to collaborate and provide a strong, unified voice for youth -- a voice that is not focused solely on recreation or fitness but also includes education, health, employment and so on.

In each community, youth serving agencies and volunteer groups, parents and young people should be encouraged to work more closely together as suggested in Section 4.2.

Together, these local task forces and the joint effort at the ministerial level should try to accomplish at least the following:

- *raise the consciousness of youth about their needs and what they can begin to do about them*
- *be a spokesperson for youth, locally and provincially*
- *continually monitor youth needs, preferences and issues*
- *continually evaluate the adequacy of the provision of services and report when deficiencies arise*
- *further examine the role recreation can play in meeting the needs of youth -- promote and raise awareness on the value of leisure*

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* *Between 1971 and 1981, the 13 to 19 year group dropped in relative size from 13.26% to 12.52% of the total Ontario population. This age group peaked in the mid 1970's and is now in decline. The 13 year age group showed the most significant drop from 1976 to 1981 (2.0% to 1.54% and 166,030 to 133,245 in absolute numbers). The 14-15 year old group also dropped in size over the same period.*

- explore the possibilities of linking up with those who are already an advocate for youth; and
- encourage agencies to be proactive in youth matters.

4.4 Study and Research

In Ontario, a few studies on youth recreational needs have been completed. Some were detailed, thorough and widely applicable. Others were much less rigorous, geographically focused and less widely useful.

Recreationists, other professionals and youth themselves have a good deal of valuable knowledge, data and opinion about the subject of youth needs and services. As this study has shown, when groups of professionals and young people are brought together for discussion, many valuable insights and impressions are generated.

Although this study has provided some good information, many questions remain and many impressions and assumptions have arisen that should be tested. More broadly-based study and some focused research is required to provide additional information that will be helpful to more completely understand youth needs, preferences, issues and how to meet them.

However, based on what is already known, there is much that can and should be done while more study and research are completed. In other words, do not wait to take action on a number of high priority fronts.

Five study and research initiatives are recommended. Ideally, they should be completed over the next three to five years. It should not be the responsibility for any one agency or ministry to take on all of these projects. Many different groups, some provincially-based and others that are community-based could be involved. Some of the studies could have both a provincial and a community specific basis to provide both broad and local data. It will likely be necessary, however, to co-ordinate the exercises from one central position.

(i) <u>Further examine what is already available:</u>

- pull together all recent studies (most were identified for this study)
- evaluate the quality and applicability of the research
- examine the findings in more detail (than this study permitted)

- *further test the combined findings with recreation and other professionals*

- *determine (more specifically) what more needs to be done*

(ii) <u>Conduct a broad, comprehensive, province-wide study of the recreational needs, preferences and issues of youth:</u>

- *build on what has been done to date*

- *involve professionals*
  - *group discussions*
  - *delphi*

- *involve youth (including major sub-groups)*
  - *survey*
  - *workshops*

- *further study the under-served sub-groups identified in this study and the perceived gaps in service (programs and facilities)*

- *test a number of key assumptions and impressions, for example:*
  - *barriers to participation (cost, lack of family back-up, busing, etc.) and ways of overcoming them*
  - *more opportunities should be provided that are for the individual and small group*
  - *the majority of girls prefer arts and crafts, special activity clubs, passive activities, opportunities for the individual*
  - *sports programs should be further balanced with other leisure activities*
  - *there should be more opportunities for spontaneous involvement*
  - *do youth choose the activities they prefer or the ones that are available?*

(iii) <u>Further study how youth can do more for themselves:</u>

- *it is clear that they want to and are able to do more*

- *need to facilitate and reinforce the message that "you can do it"*

(iv) Further study the role that recreation can play to help meet as many youth needs and concerns as possible.

(v) Needs Assessment Process:

- as suggested in Section 4.2, a process and simple research tool needs to be developed to assist communities to quickly and effectively assess the adequacy of recreational services for youth
- one or more pilot projects should be undertaken to help develop and test this process
- a handbook or video describing the technique should be developed for wide-spread distribution

4.5 Potential Role for the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation

4.5.1 INTRODUCTION

The suggestions presented here represent the collective opinion of the wide range of professionals and other informed people who were interviewed for this study; the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation field staff who responded to the survey; and additional Ministry staff who provided input in other ways. The suggestions are not listed in priority order although ther are a few references to optimum timing for implementation.

4.5.2 GENERAL COMMENTS

A good number of general comments were forthcoming that cut across many of the more specific suggestions and, in some cases, provided background to the recommendations and presented what many felt was the "way" in which the Ministry should be involved.

It must be recognized that the communities are already heavily involved in providing recreational services and opportunities for youth. Many resources and a good deal of expertise are available locally. The Ministry should work co-operatively with each community and operate at a pace with which each community is comfortable. Ministry staff should provide supplementary resources and training and help assess what needs to be done and how to do it.

The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation should collaborate and co-operate

with other provincial agencies and ministries on issues pertaining to youth. Collaboration should also be the basis for involvement at the local level. There should be a focus on pertinent issues and a discussion about how recreation can help.

The Ministry should support or initiate innovative projects that experiment with new approaches and concepts to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

In general, the Ministry should pick up the slack, supplement and complement. When others are able and willing to carry on existing programs or initiate new ones, the Ministry should take a residual but supportive role. When traditional agencies decide to reduce recreational services that are essential to youth, the Ministry should respond by first trying to encourage other groups to fill the void. If that fails or falls short, there may be a more direct role the Ministry could play.

If the Ministry decides to pursue a renewed interest in youth services, the concensus opinion is that:

a) They could renew the provincial consulting role.

b) The overall Ministry role should be more <u>indirect</u> -- for example, MTR could subsidize local agencies to carry out innovative but practical projects and approaches for providing youth services:
- *first year -- pilot projects and "seed" money*
- *second year -- provide incentive funds for agencies to collaborate on some of these projects locally*
- *third year -- evaluate and publish the results.*

There was also a very clear message about what the Ministry should <u>avoid</u> doing:

- *creating a strong central authority*
- *parachuting projects or policies into communities without consultation and local support*

4.5.3 MORE SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

4.5.3.1 Consultation (1984)

- *use this report as the basis for discussion*
- *consult with key people from a variety of recreation agencies and other Ministries with a youth mandate*
- *discuss the role recreation in general can play in meeting youth needs*

- *receive their input about the role that they believe MTR can and should play*
- *MTR staff can then finalize their role and plans of action*
  - *for 1985*
  - *broader youth mandate/role*
  - *specific initiatives*

4.5.4.2 Assume a Stronger Proactive/Catalyst Role (starting no later than 1985)

- *a much higher profile is suggested*
- *use 1985 (International Year of Youth) as a kick-off*

a) At the ministerial level, forge stronger, more meaningful and more permanent links with other ministries that have a youth mandate:

- *develop a process to pull these groups together*
- *collectively discuss issues, needs, gaps in service*
- *exchange information, ideas, philosophies*
- *discuss the role that recreation can play*
- *understand each other's mandates and policies better and look for ways to be more supportive and collaborative so they are not working at cross-purposes with each other*
- *work toward providing a more integrated and comprehensive set of services to meet all of the needs of youth*

b) At the local level, bring people together to:

- *identify issues, gaps, problems*
- *determine what needs to be done*
- *evaluate successful programs*
- *identify resources and strengths*
- *work with local people to create a community-specific profile of youth needs*
  - *utilize the research process discussed in Section 4.2*
- *exchange information*
- *subsidize local conferences, forums, workshops*

c) Create a Provincial Reference Group to encourage, identify and help implement improved approaches for youth leadership training and development:

- *For example, individual communities could send a team of adults and youth to Bark Lake for a four-day workshop to learn how to better organize and develop youth leadership. They would then return to their community to teach others. This could be called the "Youth Leadership Development Program".*

- *It could result in:*
  - *the generation of new resources for each community*
  - *a leadership network at the local level, between communities and between the Ministry and local communities (Provincial Advisory Board)*
  - *a skills exchange*
  - *expanding the role of Bark Lake*

- *The Ministry should also examine its whole leadership development program to evaluate if it requires some fine-tuning to maximize its benefit to youth.*

d) *The Ministry should develop a strong <u>leisure education</u> thrust in this area of youth services:*

- *to raise awareness and promote the importance of leisure and recreation*
- *to raise the profile of the value of leisure for helping deal with broad community and youth issues*
- *to help youth clarify their leisure interests, access opportunities available to them, and learn to be more self-sufficient in meeting their leisure needs.*

e) *<u>Advocacy:</u>*

- *The Ministry should play a role as part of the overall need for a much stronger advocate voice for youth.*

- *MTR could first raise awareness about the need for advocacy. MTR could encourage the other ministries and agencies to assume a larger role here, with the goal of providing a unified voice and a more holistic message.*

- *MTR could explore the possibility of linking up with those who are already advocates for youth.*

- *If it is not possible to work collaboratively, MTR should take the initiative and speak up for youth within their own mandate.*

- *As discussed previously, advocacy must happen on both the provincial and local levels.*

4.5.3.3 Study and Research:

- *The Ministry could get involved in this initiative which was discussed in Section 4.4. MTR should not assume full responsibility for all the research and study.*

- *MTR may want to take a leadership and co-ordination role:*
  - *could start by refining and possibly expanding the research objectives in consultation with other informed professionals (local and provincial)*
  - *could suggest how the overall task could be divided up and then encourage the involvement of others at the provincial and local levels.*

- *MTR should strongly encourage and support local involvement to conduct community-specific research and discussion.*

- *MTR could take an active role in carrying out or supporting the more broadly-based research projects, particularly in developing the process and research tools for the community-specific youth needs profiles. They could collaborate with other ministries on joint research projects.*

4.5.3.4 Produce Resource Materials: (could be initiated for 1985)

- *The Ministry could get involved in the production and sponsoring of resource materials like books, booklets, pamphlets, posters, T.V. ads, films and slide shows that would help youth serving agencies and young people in a wide variety of ways. For example:*
  - *youth doing for youth (peer leadership)*
  - *youth doing for themselves*
  - *leisure education*
  - *how to research youth needs*
  - *catalogue of available resource materials*

- *A first step could be to collect and distribute the best resource materials that have been produced by other agencies and in other provinces.*

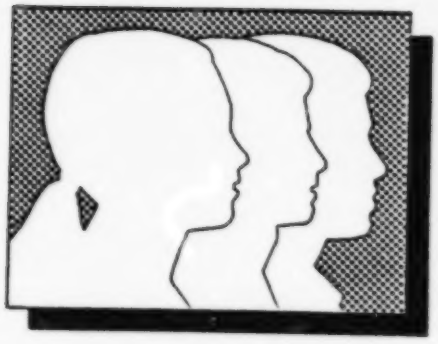
- *MTR should encourage and support as much local involvement as possible in the production of community-specific material.*

4.5.3.5 Funding:

- *More emphasis should be placed on indirect involvement:*
  - *funds should go to regional MTR offices and communities where projects are selected that are important locally.*
- *There should be more emphasis on financial assistance with operations.*
- *Encourage collaborative/co-operative efforts when using MTR funds.*
- *On the capital side, there should be support for "places for youth":*
  - *emphasis on modifying existing facilities.*
- *MTR should support local studies of youth needs and the development of better approaches to improve services.*

4.5.3.6 Role for International Year of Youth (1985):

- *Assist with promotion and awareness raising about the International Year of Youth.*
- *Use 1985 to promote the modified MTR role in the area of youth services.*
- *Initiate highest priority MTR projects and other endeavours.*
- *Support special projects to commemorate the year:*
  - *endeavour that as many as possible have lasting effects or are longer term than one year or one occasion;*
  - *ensure that as many as possible are partnerships between the Ministry and other agencies and groups at both the provincial and local levels.*
- *Could utilize Community Recreation Centres Act and Wintario Capital and Development Grants programs for I.Y.Y.*



APPENDICES

Methodology *Appendix A*

The objective of this project was to gain an overview of the recreational services provided for youth (aged 13 to 19) in Ontario, and to collect broad impressions of youth needs and recreational preferences. The scope of the study did not permit the collection of large amounts of detailed data. It had to rely upon the review of existing current studies, reports and other statistics as well as the collective opinion of informed professionals in recreation, education and other agencies and groups.

The project was divided into four stages:

- *data collection,*
- *analysis,*
- *recommendations, and*
- *report preparation.*

In Stage 1, reports on youth needs, preferences, issues and trends were sought and reviewed. Demographic statistics covering the past 15 years were analyzed to provide a general picture of the nature of the youth population, its size and growth trends relative to the population as a whole. Recreation and other trends were also examined to determine their impact on youth and their recreational preferences and needs.

The major component of Stage 1 involved interviews and workshops with key recreationists, and other professionals, as well as parents and young people. Three cities (London, Peterborough and Metropolitan Toronto) were selected as targets from which a wide range of people were contacted. Interviews were conducted, some by phone, and others in person. Other people who could provide a more provincial perspective and some who could help with the small town and rural points of view were also interviewed. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to field staff of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation. The questionnaire requested their opinions on youth needs, preferences and the adequacy of current services. In all, 26 interviews were conducted and 31 surveys were reviewed.

As the last part of Stage 1, a workshop was held in London with a representative sample of young people where their views on needs, preferences, issues and services were solicited. In addition, numerous one-on-one discussions with parents and youth were completed in Peterborough, London, Guelph and Metropolitan Toronto.

In Stage 2, all data and opinions were synthesized and analyzed to develop an overview picture of recreational services for youth and potential groups that could get involved (including youth). The analysis also led to the identification of broad youth needs and preferences. The adequacy of service provision was then studied to identify gaps in service, groups that were being missed, and how well the current delivery system was working. As part of that analysis, three feedback sessions were held with 14 recreation and education professionals. One session was held in London, another with Metropolitan Toronto and the third with the Project Steering Committee.

A First Draft of the report was then prepared and reviewed by the Project Steering Committee. The last step was the preparation of this Final Report.

Questionnaires *Appendix B*

Two questionnaires were developed for this study. One was used as the basis for the interviews conducted with recreation and other professionals. The second questionnaire was developed for the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation field staff.

Both have been reproduced below:

1. *QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AGENCY INTERVIEWS:*

AGENCY INTERVIEW

YOUTH NEEDS PREFERENCES AND SERVICES

AGENCY (GROUP): _____

CONTACT (NAMES): _____ *POSITION:* _____

TELEPHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

A. SERVICES

1. *In general, what kinds of recreational services is your agency presently providing for youth? What youth (sub groups)?*

2. *Is this the same level of service as offered in the past?*

3. *In the next 3 to 5 years, do you see yourselves offering*
   the same _____
   more _____
   less _____
   or different services? _____

4. *Will you be doing anything special for 1985 (International Year of Youth)? If so, what?*

   Will that continue after 1985?

5. *Do you require any help? If yes, what?* (. *to better provide existing services* . *to provide new or expanded services*)

6. *Does the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation do anything for your agency now?*

   Did they in the past -- what?

7. *Do they see any different roles for the Ministry?*

B. YOUTH NEEDS AND PREFERENCES

1. *What do you feel are the recreational needs and preferences of youth (13-19) today?*

2. *Has there been a notable change in the last 5 years?*

3. *Do you think that will change in the next 5 years?*

C. OTHER AGENCIES AND GROUPS

1. *Are there other agencies providing recreational services for youth in your community? (Who are the key players?)*

2. *Is your community responding well to youth needs? (What needs are not being met?)*

   Do you think that is different generally across the province?

3. *Is there anything that can be done better?*

   - can new agencies or groups get involved; if so, how?

- can others do more; if so, how?

- should some drop out?

- can youth do anything for themselves?

2. **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND RECREATION FIELD STAFF**

RECREATION BRANCH

AN EXAMINATION OF YOUTH SERVICES IN ONTARIO

1. What do you feel are the recreational needs and preferences of youth (aged 13 to 19) today?

2. In the settings that you know, do you perceive that there are some youth recreation needs which are not being met? Can you identify 1 or 2 of those gaps?

3. Can you provide the name, address, and phone number of anyone in your area who can provide a particularly good perspective on youth needs, preferences and services?

4. If you know of any particularly pertinent studies, reports, or other information that would be useful for the researchers to review, please list these and indicate where a copy could be obtained for examination. (Copies will be returned promptly.)

5. Do you know of one or more communities in your area which are doing a particularly good job of providing recreation services for youth? If so, whom can the researchers contact?

6. What do you feel should be the Ministry's role in this field?

7. Other comments.

Your name _____

List of Contacts and Reports — Appendix C

1. Interviews: Personal and Telephone

John Gilliland 679-5549	Acting Director, Recreation Department, Public Utilities Commission, 300 Dufferin Avenue London, Ontario N6B 1Z2
Murray Faulkner 667-3300	Chief Executive Officer, YMCA-YWCA, 382 Waterloo Street, London, Ontario N6B 2N8
Terry Roberts 439-2451	Assistant Superintendent, The London Board of Education, Education Centre, 205 Elwood Avenue, Box 5873, London, Ontario N6A 4T5
Don Donner 434-6054	Executive Director, Memorial Boys & Girls Club, 184 Horton Street, London, Ontario N6B 1K8
Don Reid 438-2947	District Supervisor, Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, 495 Richmond Street, 5th Floor, London, Ontario N6A 5A9
Dagmar Kanzler 593-4525	Communications Manager, Katimavik (Ontario Office) 146 Front Street West, Suite 680, Toronto, Ontario M5J 2L7
Bob Couchman 922-3126	Executive Director, Family Service Association of Metro Toronto, 22 Wellesley Street East, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1G3

Franco Savoya *922-7626*	*Vice President for Centres and Programs,* *YMCA-YWCA Metro Toronto,* *36 College Street,* *Toronto, Ontario M5K 1G8*
Dr. Dan Offord *388-0240, ext. 7358*	*Professor of Psychology,* *McMaster Medical Centre,* *McMaster University,* *Hamilton, Ontario*
Dr. Dale Shuttleworth *653-2270*	*Assistant Superintendent, Community Services,* *York Board of Education,* *2 Threthewey Drive,* *Toronto, Ontario M6M 4A8*
Tom Coon *(902) 422-6437*	*Chief Executive Officer,* *Halifax YMCA,* *P.O. Box 3024,* *Halifax South, Nova Scotia B3J 3N1*
Scott Darrach *491-0330*	*Education Officer, Central Ontario Region,* *Ontario Ministry of Education,* *2025 Sheppard Avenue East, Suite 201,* *Willowdale, Ontario M2J 1W4*
Johh Flynn *468-4271*	*Director, Human Values Programs,* *The Niagara Institute,* *Box 1041,* *Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario L0S 1J0*
Alex Owen *922-8117*	*Vice President, International YMCA Division,* *Central Ontario YMCA,* *36 College Street,* *Toronto, Ontario M5G 1K8*
Ken Balmer	*Planning Co-ordinator,* *Calgary Parks and Recreation Department,* *P.O. Box 2100,* *Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M5*
Ann Breakey	*Youth Director,* *Evangal Hall,* *573 Queen Street West,* *Toronto, Ontario M5V 2B6*
Gillian Sandeman *743-1681*	*Executive Director,* *Youth of Otonabee,* *661 Park Street North,* *Peterborough, Ontario K9H 5S4*

Donna O'Shanassey *743-6100*	*Case Worker,* *Big Brothers/Big Sisters,* *209 Simcoe Street,* *Peterborough, Ontario K9H 2H6*
Noreen Hughes *745-0032*	*Secretary,* *Girl Guides of Canada,* *Peterborough Division,* *1310 Olympus Avenue,* *Peterborough, Ontario K9H 6v7*
Lois McGuinness *748-9622*	*Program Director,* *YMCA,* *475 George Street,* *Peterborough, Ontario*
Karen Sharpe *742-7771*	*Recreation Supervisor,* *City of Peterborough,* *Parks and Recreation Department,* *City Hall,* *500 George Street North,* *Peterborough, Ontario*
Pat Power *745-3588*	*Chairman,* *Christian Youth Dynamics,* *Peterborough, Ontario*
Herb Franklin *745-3552*	*District Commissioner,* *Boy Scouts of Canada,* *217 Brock Street,* *Peterborough, Ontario K9H 2P6*
Nancy Sharpe *743-7431*	*Community School Project Co-ordinator,* *Peterborough Board of Education,* *150 O'Carroll Avenue,* *Peterborough, Ontario*
Teresa Kramer *677-6270*	*Recreation Supervisor - Youth Programs,* *Malton Community Council,* *7205 Goreway Drive,* *Malton, Ontario L4T 2T9*
Dianne Nielsen *742-7771*	*Recreation Supervisor,* *City of Peterborough,* *Parks and Recreation Department,* *City Hall,* *500 George Street North,* *Peterborough, Ontario*

2. Feedback Groups

A. LONDON GROUP

John Gilliland 679-5549	Acting Director, Recreation Department Public Utilities Commission 300 Dufferin Avenue, London, Ontario N6B 1Z2
Murray Faulkner 667-3300	Chief Executive Officer, YMCA-YWCA, 382 Waterloo Street, London, Ontario N6B 2N8
Terry Roberts 439-2451	Assistant Superintendent, The London Board of Education, Education Centre, 205 Elwood Avenue, Box 5873, London, Ontario N6A 4T5
Don Donner 434-6054	Executive Director, Memorial Boys & Girls Club, 184 Horton Street, London, Ontario N6B 1K8
Don Reid 438-2947	District Supervisor, Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, 495 Richmond Street, 5th Floor, London, Ontario N6A 5A9

B. NORTH YORK GROUP

Ross Fair 653-2700, ext. 281	Recreation Supervisor, City of York Parks and Recreation Department, 2700 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M6M 1V1
Carl Cadogan 746-3992	North York Youth Employment Service (Y.E.S.), 10 Turf Grassway, #106, Downsview, Ontario
Jane Robinson 224-6274 (& Hilliary Baisley)	Recreation Supervisor, City of North York 5000 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario

David Rew 465-5469	Boys and Girls Clubs, 86 Blake Street, Toronto, Ontario M4J 3C9
Teresa Kramer 677-6270	Recreation Supervisor for Youth Programs, Malton Community Council, 7205 Goreway Drive, Malton, Ontario L4T 2T9

3. Youth

Several contacts were made with youth throughout the project. A group of fourteen youth, ages 15 to 19 years met in London, Ontario to provide input on needs and preferences. Males and females were represented equally. In the Acton and Guelph communities approximately fifteen youth and parents were contacted on an informal, individual basis. Similarly, in the Peterborough area, approximately fifteen youth were contacted in urban and rural settings on an individual, informal basis.

4. Questionnaire to Ministry of Tourism and Recreation Field Staff

A questionnaire was distributed to all Recreation Branch field staff. Thirty-one staff respsonded. A copy of the questions asked forms part of Appendix B. A summary of the Ministry responses can be found in Appendix D.

5. Reports/Studies

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